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How to Live
or
Youths Gospel

100. n.

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H O W T O L I V E ;

OR,

YOUTH'S GOSPEL.



HOW TO LIVE;

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PREFACE.

THE following Chapters are intended, briefly and suggestively, to bring before Youth going out into the world some suitable lessons of the Gospel; to show how lovingly and faithfully Christ, by His word and example, meets the wants and weaknesses, the hopes and affections, of early life.

Life, it has been said, is the highest of all arts : it needs, then, the highest of all wisdom. May He, who is "the wisdom of God," be youth's Guide, even as to all, and for all times, He offers Himself, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life !"

D. T.

May 1862.

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HOW TO LIVE.

CHAPTER I.

LEARN TO LIVE.

“AD I life to begin again!” Is it not a reflection which every one of us has occasion to make? How many things we might have done better! in how many ways we might have acted more wisely! In reviewing the conduct of our life for ourselves, as well as towards God and our fellowmen, we must confess that “We have done those things which we ought not to have done, and we have left undone the things which we ought to have done.” If, then, we could begin life again with our present experience, what a much better life we think we could make of it!

“*With our present experience;*” there is the want. We cannot carry this back to the years that are past: we cannot enter the world anew, and set forth at once

with the hopeful vigour of youth and the grave experience of manhood. Our disadvantage it may seem to be, as one has quaintly observed, that "we live in this world *for the first time*." * Everything comes new to us ; every situation is felt to be strange ; we are constantly meeting with surprises in life, and seem always to be learning, a little too late, what it most concerns us to know. In short, we are learning to-day how we should have lived yesterday.

"Well," men say, "live and learn ;" and it is thought a wise maxim. But this is not a maxim, nor is it wise. For if our life is to be spent in learning to live, when are we to practise the lesson ? Ere our problem is solved, we die ; and for ourselves the experience is lost. This saying only states *the fact* of our worldly life, and *the folly* of it. We do *live and learn* ; and thereby we learn too late to live.

The wisdom of God, on the other hand, saith, "LEARN AND LIVE." Here, in THE GOSPEL, is your lesson of life from its very commencement. You may know it as early as you can know anything ; you may enter on life with the best experience how to live. "I will instruct thee and teach thee, in the way that thou shalt go !"—this is the voice of the Father and the Guide of our youth.

* Schœffer's "Albert Durer."

Life is too precious for experiments in living ; life is too difficult an art for our own unaided strength and skill. It is a hard thing to live at all in this world ;—hardest of all to live well. Would it were as sensible a truth to us at our entrance on the world, as it becomes in our progress through life, or at its close.

“There are truths”—and this is one of them—
“which become more vivid and distinct as we enter the dark avenue that conducts us to the tomb : but it is *on looking back* that we discover them. They are truths we have passed by and lived amongst—truths of that common daylight we are quitting—so familiar, we call them truisms—truths which the child lisps, and the youth kindles at, and only the busy man forgets.” *

* Thorndale ; or, The Retrospect.

CHAPTER II.

LEARNING AND UNLEARNING.

WE do all begin life with a kind of experience. We do not start from innocence like our first parents; and we err much in our counsels—as youth errs in the attempted practice of them—by supposing that any one enters inexperienced upon the world. At what earliest period of life is man “simple concerning evil?” This, truly, is the earliest experience, the daily experience, the latest experience of our common human nature—“the knowledge of good and evil;” this the first, this through life the most difficult wisdom, “to know how to choose the good, and to refuse the evil.”

How, or why this is so, we need not curiously inquire. The *fact* is plain; and this concerns us most, not only *to allow it* in theory, but *to allow for it* also, that the experience of evil is born in us, and bred with us, and passes life with us.

Do you allow for this, parents, pastors, guardians,

and counsellors of youth? Do you consider this yourselves, ye youth, whom counsels, warnings, prayers follow, when ye are entering on "this present evil world?"

The experience of the evil world is the enlarged experience of your own evil self. The world, amidst which life is passed, is the great human nature in many individuals—the past race of mankind, as the future, is but the changing present. While, then, it is true of the individual, that "each one of us lives in this world for the first time," it does not follow that the experience of life should be new and strange to us.

Our common nature has lived before us; and the good and evil which we meet, have been in like manner the portion of our predecessors in the path of life.

The sins of my youth, then, have not the excuse of ignorance and inexperience of evil; nor have the virtues of my companions been merely the continuance of their early innocence.

Life, from its beginning of conscious power, is *a learning and an unlearning*; our task is to *get rid* of one experience, to become "simple unto evil," and to attain a better knowledge—to be "wise unto that which is good."

See here youth's mistake and temptation. Simplicity is counted weakness, silliness, *want* of experi-

6 *LEARNING AND UNLEARNING.*

ence ; and youth feels ashamed to be without that, which is thought to be the privilege of manhood, "to know good and evil."

So the temptation follows in its old course, the folly of becoming wise in sin.

There is the poet's saying, but not wisely said,

"Vice to be hated needs but to be seen !"

True ; if vice were always seen in its hatefulness, and seen only by the virtuous. But not true, when vice is presented in alluring charms, and to the lustful eye. It is known already in the sinful heart, would you have it drawn forth into the sinful act ?

Here is better wisdom. Cast out rather the guilty thought, and preserve your innocence of deed. UNLEARN the heart knowledge, and continue, by God's grace, ignorant of the practice. Otherwise you gain wisdom, but not that which descendeth from above. The wisdom of evil is "earthly, sensual, devilish ;" it makes you old, but not wise ; knowing, but not prudent ; experienced indeed, but not the better for it. You have evil enough in you already. Learn not more from the world without, lest "seven other spirits more wicked than yourself enter in, and dwell in you ; then shall your last state be worse than the first."

LEARNING AND UNLEARNING. 7

Therefore, dear youth, "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil."

Wait not that longer experience of evil which finds utterance in the cry, "Had I life to begin again!" Anticipate the reflection which afterwards is made in vain. From your early experience of the evil in you, acknowledge for yourself the necessity pressed upon us all by Him, who "knew what was in man,"—"Ye must be born again."

You must begin a *new life*—not merely begin life anew. Your gospel is, "A new heart will I give unto you, and a new spirit will I put within you."

The offer and promise is for the young in years as well as for the old in sin. At earliest age the necessity makes itself manifest, and the sooner the better "put ye off the old man, and put ye on the new." A life's gain it is, when thus you begin to unlearn the experience of evil, and learn of Christ, the only wise and the truly good.

Disciple means *learner*; and, as young disciples of Christ, come and learn of Him who is "the wisdom of God," in whom "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." He knew, and in trying circumstances He practised the knowledge, leaving you the example, "how to choose the good and to refuse the evil."

8 *LEARNING AND UNLEARNING.*


Give His gospel your earnest attention. "Never man spake like this man."

Give Him your confidence : He seeks it. He upbraideth not your ignorance. He sympathizes with you, He "can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way."

He knows what is in you. He knows what you need ; and out of His own fulness He supplies you. His Spirit is the heavenly Teacher. Ask His aid. He is promised to your prayers. He abides in the docile and faithful heart, and reveals the hidden wisdom to them that love the truth.

CHAPTER III.

THE WORLD AND ITS EVIL.

AY by day you make mention of the Evil One in your prayers ; do you daily resist him, when you are in the world ?

The world is the throng of human life,—mankind in manifold character, calling, condition ; and he is called “ the prince of this world.”

To enter the world is to take our place in life’s active career ; to retire from the world is to cease our active pursuits in the business of life ; to leave the world, or to be taken out of the world, is our removal from place and presence in this land of the living.

What a history is contained in these simple phrases ; what hopes in entering the world ; what experiences in its career ; what a retrospect from its close ; what a prospect beyond !

And were it not folly to enter such a world without a guide ; loneliness, to pass through its experiences without God ; misery, to leave it without hope ?

10 *THE WORLD AND ITS EVIL.*

Blessed be God, who provides the Guardian and the Guide, and permits us to hear the words of Him who ever liveth to make intercession for us: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the Evil!"

Our blessed Lord speaks of "the world" as something opposed to Himself and His kingdom—"I am not of the world;" and so of His disciples, "Ye are not of the world."

Hence the injunction upon us, "Love not the world;" and yet it is written, "God so loved the world!"

It is the same world, but the love is different. God loves the world in the generous purpose of saving it; man loves the world in the selfish purpose of enjoying it.

Therefore we are called out of the world, *to separate our love from it*; and we are left in the world, *to carry out God's love for it*.

The world out of which Christ calls His followers, the world in which He leaves us for His own generous purposes, is the busy human life, amidst which we have each one our being and our place. This is the sphere of our active duty, of our responsibilities, of our discipline, of our work for God, for ourselves, for our fellowmen.

The world is not only the sphere of our business, it is also, and specially, the sphere of our religion. And whatever temporal calling a youth chooses and follows, this is the sphere of his Christian calling also. It is at the cost of all right principle, when a man attempts to separate these things, to make a distinction between himself in the world, and himself in the Church.

“What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?” Can any one be a saint before God, and a sinner among men? You can have no godly character which is not your worldly character. You must be every day, what you profess to be on the Lord’s day. Your just and generous dealing to your neighbour is of more regard to the Lord than all your religious services to Him.

Your day’s work is your worship; take heed to whom you are paying it. “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon!” “Choose ye whom ye will serve.”

The strictness of the Sabbath and the laxity of the week-days, is not the gospel for man in the world. This training is neither according to the law nor the liberty of Christ: it is bad training either for the Church or for the world. It makes the Christian a hypocrite, and the worldly man a coward. His conscience is wronged for six days, and falsely healed on one.

12 *THE WORLD AND ITS EVIL.*

Let youth consider that even as Christ was in the world, so are they to be in the world; and as the heavenly Father has placed them in the world, and leaves them in the world, so it is in the world that they are to serve Christ, and do God's work, and glorify the Father, being "blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke," shining as "lights in the world."

Forth into the world ye must go: your manhood calls you; God's providence leads you, and "the Lord is faithful who shall stablish you, and keep you from the Evil."

With many fears and loving anxieties, your parents and guardians follow your first steps from the sanctuary of home into the evil world abroad.

You cannot, you would not, always abide under the tender care and authority of a parent's roof. And although parents might retain you with them, it were not good either for you or for themselves.

But is there no other sanctuary, in which they might place you and keep you safe as early dedicated to the Lord, even as the mother of Samuel bestowed the son of her prayers in the house of the Lord?

No, ye parents; either into this world, or into the world to come, there is no other outgoing for your children.

Some of the young the heavenly Father does take out of the world. He calls them from their parent's house straight to their heavenly home. And you mourn their outgoing in this way: yet you believe that "it is well with your child."


For others, the Saviour is pleading with His Father,—“I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world; but that thou shouldest keep them from the Evil!”

Is not this a sufficient warrant to you? Send your youth forth in the full faith of it. Believe yourselves, and teach them to believe, that the world is the sanctuary in which the Christian has his work, and service, and perfecting in holiness,—the sanctuary in which the follower of Christ has, like Christ, his ministry for God's glory and the good of man,—the sanctuary where the child of God both offers the prayer, and finds the answer of the prayer, “Deliver us from the Evil!”

The faith in God's guiding and preserving power in the world, is youth's safety. It is the gospel of your salvation, that Christ has overcome the world and its Evil, “and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

CHAPTER IV.

VOLUNTEERING.

E may have times of peace, when the occasions of war are only hidden, not absent: and what again and again has occurred in our national experience is continually the case in our spiritual life. We are secure, but not safe, "saying Peace, peace, when there is no peace."

But the day comes when we are awakened from our false security. We hear of wars and rumours of war. We behold danger nigh, where there was no precaution; an enemy threatening, while we have been neglecting our defences. Now we rouse ourselves in earnest. Now we know that our dearest interests are in peril; our homes, our liberties, our peace and prosperity, our holy religion exposed to the ravages of a powerful foe. Our sovereign calls, our country calls, our own heart's zeal prompts us, to arm and muster and offer our service. We are

ready to "jeopard our lives unto the death in the high places of the field."

So nobly have stood forth the generous youth of our land in the day of her peril.

Now listen, ye youth, to another and a continued call upon your martial spirit. The world, in midst of which you live, is the scene of a great and perpetual warfare—the conflict of Christ with Satan, for truth against falsehood, spiritual life and liberty against the dominion of sin and death. In this battle of the Lord, every one of you, who would not remain fast bound as Satan's slave, must have his part.

But you see no battle array ; you hear no trumpet of war.

No ; for your spiritual danger and your spiritual enemies come upon you unawares ; they are making their approaches, while you dream only of peace.

The world loved to repose, though it were in false and fatal security. Men fancied themselves free, when they served self and sin : they said " peace and safety " when sudden destruction was coming upon them. The Lord for a season suffered mankind to abide in the moral solitude, which they called peace. But the time came when the alarm should be sounded, and the summons to the battle of freedom go forth. The

Lord saw that "there was no man"—not a *man* among the human race, not one of manly spirit and manly might; none to arise as a deliverer, and arouse his fellows from their abject servitude and ignoble security.

"He wondered there was no intercessor"—no one to redeem his brother from bondage, or to plead with God, saying, "Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercy's sake." Not a freeman's voice to raise the battle cry—"Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered!"

Therefore His own arm brought salvation. The Lord Himself undertook our cause—the man Christ Jesus. He is the Champion of our race, the Captain of our salvation, who girded Himself to the battle of our freedom. For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation on His head; and so, for the overthrow of the enemy, and the deliverance of His people, THE LORD has gone forth in "the day of His power."

Dear youth, this day of Christ's power comes to each of you, whensoever you are aroused, by the call of God's word and providence, to the sense of your soul's danger, and the concern of your salvation. The reign and power of the Lord Jesus Christ is your dearest, most urgent interest. It is to you home

and country, and freedom and peace and life, and all that renders life precious and enduring. For you did the Messiah thus labour and suffer, thus do and die, in His mighty power and all-enduring love.

Your cause He undertook—your enemies He encountered—your freedom He vindicated—for your victory He fought—for your life He devoted Himself to death—for your latest triumph He rose again—and now for you He lives and reigns in heaven. He demands your allegiance as your rightful king. He summons you to His ranks as the Captain of the Lord's host, holding forth His Cross as the standard of liberty, the trophy of victory, the signal of glorious peace. He requires your faith, your fidelity and obedience, that serving Him you may be free. Fight therefore the good fight of faith, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Be strong and of a good courage: it is the day of your Redeemer's might. So long as the world lasts in its enmity to God—so long as Satan works, and sin prevails, and sinners wait for salvation—so long is it "the day of the Messiah's power."

For you it is the day of His power, as day by day you must war against the Devil, the world, and the flesh. The demand is heard as of old, "Who is on

the Lord's side?" For God or Satan, for Christ or Belial: "choose ye this day whom ye will serve!"

"Lord, I will follow Thee!"

What then, young Christians, is the service on which you are called out? It is, first, a willing service, a VOLUNTEERING. Not of constraint, but with willing mind, join yourselves unto the Lord. *Give your ourselves to Christ*, for He seeks not yours, but you. You are already promised to Him, as a "willing people;" yea, ye are already His, for "ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price," not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with His own precious blood.

Does not the Lord worthily claim you and your service? He might have demanded it with the word of authority—He might have exacted it under severest penalties; but He asks, He invites, He gives occasion for your willing devotion: "My son," He saith, "give me thine heart!" His is the plea of love for love: He first loved us, and now He asks of every one of you, "Lovest thou me?" Who will not answer, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee!" Lord, I am thine! "What wouldst thou have me to do?"

You have said it, in saying, "I am not my own;" *you have denied self*, the very first step in following Christ.

It is a needful, it is a reasonable and very wise demand.

You cannot serve self and Christ too ; nor do you join the ranks *to do your own will*, and seek your own pleasure, and follow your own ways. You renounce these self-ends, and yield yourselves to the will and guidance of another. So you are engaged to be "the Lord's." His blood has redeemed you, His Spirit has quickened you, His name is upon you. Thank God, you are not your own ; your own ye were in sin, and doom, and power of death. Another's ye might have been, "the children of the Devil ;" but God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved you, has taken you to be His.

And what a relief it is to get rid, in however small a degree, of our sinful self. What a plague this self is to us, to our enjoyments, our dispositions, our affections, our whole character and doings. Self spoils everything with which you join it. *Self*-will is sinful will ; *self*-love is mean ; *self*-esteem is vanity ; *self*-righteousness is worthless. Christ, then, does you good service in teaching you to renounce this spoiler of all good ; and what we give up to Him and for Him, He truly restores fourfold, enriching and ennobling you with God's will, God's love, God's

praise, God's righteousness. So you can say, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Deny self, then, and follow Christ, separate from sin, and holy unto the Lord. Keep under the body, and bring it into subjection. Flee youthful lusts. "Exercise yourselves unto godliness." Soldiers are not made by mere zeal and readiness to serve. There must be training, and drilling, and discipline, and endurance. You must discipline yourself. Exhortation may do much, instruction and example do much in your training; but chiefly you must train yourselves, you must use your own muscles and put the restraint upon your own members.

It is well, when the training has the advantage of youth's vigour and pliability.

"I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong." Strong ye are in affection, in will, in power for good or evil. Come, learn of Christ, how to use your strength wisely—rather learn how *impotent* you are in yourselves, how little power you have over that strong will, and strong passion, and strength of action in which you are prone to boast. When you are self-strong, you are weak; when weak in self, you are strong in the Lord. Youth is trustful, and easily deceived; youth is hopeful, but easily cast down; youth is loving, but not always loving wisely.

Here is your Gospel, ye who have life's ardent energies in you, its high hopes, its warm affections, its ready confidences. The Gospel of Christ, free to all, is specially yours in its great principles and powers. **FAITH**, the undoubting confidence of youth; **HOPE**, the heaven-soaring spirit of youth; **LOVE**, the emotion strongest in the young heart. "These three;" and Christ their source, their centre, and their aim.

CHAPTER V.

THE CROSS AND THE YOKE.



CROSS and a yoke! Are these your portion as a Christian? and does this seem "a hard saying?"

If any saying of Christ seem to be *hard*, the hardness must be in our understanding of it, and not in Christ's meaning. For we cannot suppose that He meant to put any hindrance or discouragement in the way of His followers. Our human nature, and especially our youthful nature, readily shrinks from everything in the form of burden, discipline, or restraint. And as youth's first notion of religion is that of divine authority and control, it is not surprising that the words of Christ should alarm self-will and self-love.

There is something irksome and painful in submission and self-denial; and we would all fain take Peter's counsel,—“Spare thyself; this shall not be unto thee!”

But let us consider attentively the call and offer of Christ. Is there any “hard saying” here, or have we been alarmed without cause? The “cross,”

—there's the difficulty : but it is not a difficulty introduced by the Gospel, certainly not created or imposed by the Gospel. Christ says not “my cross,” but “his cross,” *the man's own cross*, whatsoever that be. The cross is ours ; the yoke is Christ's.

Has not every man his *cross* ? It is the common name for all trial, trouble, grief, pain, and disappointment in the life of man. It is man's own portion, whether he be a Christian or not : it is peculiar to humanity, and universal in the experience of mankind.

Christ speaks of the cross, not as the badge of His profession ; but as something which a man has, and which he is to take up on becoming His follower. Assuredly he will find in so doing, that the following of Christ is not the hardness of the cross. Yes, it is man's own ; and it is the only thing we are permitted to bring with us in renouncing the world. As when Christ bade the rich young ruler go and sell all his possessions and give to the poor, He added, “Come, take up the cross, and follow me !”

It may be, as it was with this young man, that we do not find our cross, until we begin to divest ourselves of our world, our engrossing pleasures, our encumbering substance, or our besetting sins. For we have a way of hiding our cross, or gilding it over,

24 *THE CROSS AND THE YOKE.*

or padding it about, so as to make it more easy to ourselves, and less offensive in the eyes of men.

Still the cross is there : it is in your lot, in every man's lot. It is appointed to man as man. "Man that is born of a woman, is of few days and full of trouble." Not naturally, yet, by God's decree, necessarily. "Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground ; yet man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward."

It is God's appointment for all men ; for Jew and Gentile, believer and unbeliever, righteous and wicked, for him that serveth God, and him that serveth Him not.

The cross is common to every age and every rank. The discipline of childhood is a cross ; the restraints of youth if submitted to, and the license of youth if indulged ; the disappointment of manhood's prospects, and their little satisfaction when fulfilled ; the infirmity of old age, and the pang through which alone the rest can be reached—all is a cross. Some cross we suffer in ourselves, some cross in our relations to our fellowmen ; some cross in the flesh, disease, want, pain ; some cross in the spirit, anxiety, sorrow, mortification, self-reproach.

The more deeply we search into our hearts, and

the more widely we extend our connexions in the world, from within and from without, we enlarge our experience of the cross. Our appetites, passions, tempers, affections, expose us to the cross; our sins and follies, our self-will and self-indulgence, are certain to bring the suffering of many a cross. Even with the easiest state of mind, and the evenest course of life, we cannot escape the cross. Although we could rule ourself, we cannot control others. "It must needs be that offences come." Strifes, emulations, envyings, jealousies, stirring around, will not suffer us to enjoy the calm. And as none of us stands alone in the world, we must in some measure be partakers in the afflictions, adversities, losses, and sufferings, which form the common lot of mankind.

So common is this lot, that in taking on Him our nature, the Son of God underwent this experience of humanity also. Before He ended His sufferings and our sins on the cross of Calvary, Jesus, during His life on earth, bore His cross as man born of woman. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was despised of men and afflicted of God. He hungered, He thirsted, He toiled and was weary. He groaned in agony of spirit, and was made to drink the cup of bitterness in malice of His enemies, and faithlessness of His friends. Cross of bodily pain,

cross of mental anguish, cross of contradiction of sinners, cross of ingratitude of followers, cross of Satan's temptation, cross of the Almighty's rod, all was to Jesus the bearing of the cross, until on the cross He expired. And why? That in all things He might be made like His brethren. He could not be like us in our sinfulness, but He was like us in suffering.

He came down from heaven into this evil world as into the school of adversity, here to humble Himself, to deny Himself His due honours, and submit Himself to the will of God, taking upon Him the form and the work of a servant; and "though He were a Son, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered." I speak not now of the cross of Christ, on which He offered Himself to God the sacrifice and ransom for our souls. In that expiatory suffering wherein He died for our sins, and made our peace with God, Jesus has none to share His cross, none to imitate His example.

But in His self-denial, His patient endurance, His pious submission to His God, His meekness and forbearance under pain and injury and reproach, Jesus the Son of man has left us an example that we should follow His steps. And with the power and sympathy of a fellow-sufferer, He speaks—"If any man will

come after me, let him deny himself, and take his cross and follow me."

When Christ invites you to follow Him, He counsels you regarding your cross. "Deny self and take up thy cross."

This, you observe, is directly contrary to the way of the world, which is to *indulge self*, and *get rid of the cross*. The desire and endeavour of worldly life is to escape from pain and trouble, and to find ease and pleasure. And is not this desirable? Yes, if you could do it effectually; if with pain and trouble you could rid yourself also of the cause of all your misery, if you could free yourself from *sin* as well as from *suffering*. This you cannot do; and you never shall be free of your cross, until you be free from your sin. It is laid upon you, because you need it, and can only thus be reclaimed,—

" Our sins afflict us; and the cross
Must bring us back to God."

All the impatience under your cross and efforts to get rid of it, only weary and vex you to no profit. "It is vain for you to kick against the pricks."

Jesus speaks true wisdom and true peace. Instead of proudly casting it aside, or despairingly fainting under it, *take up your cross*, take it as God's appointment for you, and bear it as His merciful and

salutary discipline. Be it your concern, not to be rid of your cross, but to learn its lessons ; consider not yourself and your suffering, but God and His chastening. “ My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, neither faint when thou art rebuked of Him.”

Say “ No ” to self, when it murmurs ; say “ Yea, Lord,” when He chastens. This is the self-denial you must exercise. Say not only, “ I suffer ; ” but “ God’s will be done.” Not in despair, “ I have lost all ; ” but, “ The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Endeavour thus to lay aside the *egotism* of your suffering, thinking less of self the sufferer, and more of God the sanctifier of suffering.

Truly this is the wisdom of One who knows our nature. You know how much the pain and vexation of any trouble is aggravated by the selfish view of it. The smart of the wound—the sting of the injury—the bitterness of the grief, is mainly that it has happened to *me*.

We think only of wounded self, and injured self, and bereaved self, brooding over our lot as peculiarly hard, as though some strange thing happened to us. And so we toss and fret, or sink and faint under the burden of our selfish woe.

Is this *taking up our cross*? Is this the courage of endurance, this the patience of submission? Nay, dear friends, this is no way of alleviating your pains.

“Come unto me,” saith Christ, “all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest! Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

But what relief is this that the Gospel offers? Jesus says to us, “Take up your cross;” and again, “Take my yoke!” Does He mean to add to our burden? Far from it; He desires to ease your burden, to teach you how to bear it.

A *yoke* is not worn as a burden, but as a *means of more easily carrying the burden*. It is placed on a man’s shoulders to equalize the weight of what he carries, and distribute it over the stronger parts of his body.

Jesus looks upon us as we pass through life with our various crosses, and trials, and sorrows, and He calls to us,—O ye labouring heavy-laden mortals, here is help and ease, and hope of rest for you. You have all your crosses, come to me and learn how to bear them. “Take my yoke,” my way of bearing trial and suffering. I take all and bear all that my Father wills to lay upon me; I take it and bear it on a “meek

and lowly heart ;"— so do ye. The meekness and gentleness of Christ, *the very spirit of self-denial*, this is the secret of patience and peace, this is the equalizing yoke by means of which the burden is lightened, and the cross more easily borne.

In this spirit bear ye your cross. It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth, to practise patience and meekness, when the spirit is most impetuous and unruly. It will save you many a bitter pang ; even as you know how a word of offence which falls harmless on the meekness of one man, will rankle as a barbed arrow in the pride of another. And when from the hand of your God you thus meekly take your cross, you learn and experience its blessed purpose, as laid upon you not in wrath, but in love, not to grieve but to improve you, to make you partaker of His holiness, and discipline you for glory.

Had there been any better way than the way of the cross, any means more salutary for the perfecting and glorifying of man, assuredly it would have been manifested in the life of the man Christ Jesus. And is it not a proof of the Father's love and purpose towards you, when He is leading you by the same way of suffering to the same glorious perfection ?

CHAPTER VI.

TEMPTATION.



TEMPTATION is a very remarkable exercise to which God subjects His children.

The first man Adam was early put on trial; the second man, the Lord from heaven, was similarly tempted by Satan; and every child of God has temptation such as is common to man.

We have our “divers temptations,” the special strivings of the good and the evil in us.

It is the experience of every one who knows himself; and our conscious life and trial of life in the world is “to choose the good, and refuse the evil.”

No man of reasonable mind would of choice do what is wrong, if it were as easy for him to do the right. The good is alway preferable: but *an effort* is required to choose and hold it. In that effort consists the *enduring of temptation*.

In acknowledgment of our own weakness for the trial, we are taught to pray—“Lead us not into

temptation ;” while to encourage our faith under trials we cannot escape, the blessing of endurance is set forth, “Blessed the man that endureth temptation.”

Many are the ways in which the trial is made of us.

Appetite has the temptation of unlawful indulgence ; health the temptation of reckless pleasure ; sickness the temptation of peevish impatience ; wealth the temptation of selfish enjoyment ; poverty the temptation of dishonest relief. Prosperity and success expose us to the temptation of presumption and vain-glory ; adversity and disappointment have sore trial of despondency and discontent.

How true to the experience of all times are the words of Agur the son of Jakeh, and how wise for youth’s entrance on life his prayer :—“Two things have I required of thee ; deny me them not before I die : remove far from me vanity and lies : give me neither poverty nor riches ; feed me with food convenient for me : lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord ? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.”

This common temptation, this certain trial, is the occasion of those fears and anxieties with which youth are sent forth into the world. Let none expect to escape the trial, nor be over-cautious to avoid it. No man is known until he is tried. You cannot

know yourself, neither can others know you, until then. You appear kind and amiable, chaste and blameless, honest and truthful. With such dispositions and characters you are favourites at home, and are received with hopeful prepossessions when you enter into the world.

Disappointment follows—youth's promising qualities fail to be realized—the new sphere of life does not develop the goodness, which a fond home had fostered. And men say they are deceived in the youth ; and the hopeful welcome is changed into cold neglect, or stern rebuke.

But who deceived you, ye masters, superiors, men of the world ? You took the untested youth from his home : should you not have known that the home estimate is not the market-value of any one, or of anything ?

Are any of you, who have passed some years in the world, as good and amiable, as chaste and honourable, as when you first entered upon the trying career ? You are, it may be, even in these respects better, more steadfast, than in youth's seeming innocence. And how have you become so ? *You have been proved*, and therefore you are now approved.

Acknowledge the same necessity for those who follow you in life. You do not regard much the

home-amiabilities : you are wont to say, that a youth is not worth much until he has had his trials. You cannot keep him from temptation, but you can do much to help him in enduring it. At least, do not cast him down with a frown, or, what is most galling to youth's spirit, the reproach that you have been deceived in him.

And to youth themselves let me say, Let not the temptation take you by surprise. Peter's error was, that he would not take the warning. He did not believe in temptation as a *trial to be endured*, a test that every one must pass through. He scorned, both for himself and his Master, the very mention of it. He would not submit his virtue, his fidelity, to any such proof. He was self-confident, presuming upon a goodness that had not been tried : he would, then and there, have the approval of a courage which he had never yet proved. Therefore his Lord prepared for the self-confident follower a most humiliating test of his boasted valour.

Do not despise temptation, nor court it ; in either case you sin presumptuously.

But expect it, and prepare to endure it, that is, to *dure through it*. Temptation besets your path every where and at all times. In the world, and in retirement, in body and in spirit, in our relations to our

fellow-men, and in our duty towards God. Nor only besetting our path; the great and unceasing trial and battle of life is going on within us. "I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me!" What is this evil in me, and whither is it urging me? Am I to yield to this evil will, this law of sin? Or how can I perform the good which I would do?

You know such thoughts: often in vexation, and with hard words against God and against your own nature, you indulge them.

Now I say, dear youth, cherish such questionings, but in a meek and hopeful spirit: encourage this inner struggle, and carry it on under the banner of Christ. Do not condemn yourself for the experience of evil in you; the temptation—the warfare of flesh against spirit—is not sin to you, *unless you yield to it*.

It is a sign of grace, not of greater depravity, when you can say, "I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." "I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind."

The wilful sinner—the carnal and sensual man—knows nothing of this conflict; he will not acknowledge it; he has yielded, ere the contest has begun.

Rather ye accept the trial, and endure it as a hopeful trial—the battle of life, and for life.

Temptation endured betokens spiritual life. It is a trial that has exercised saints rather than sinners, not the children of this world, but the children of God. Know ye then, and be assured of this, *that you are not given over to the power of evil.* The Evil One tries to persuade you that you are given over to his power, that your sinful nature is both a cause and an excuse for sinning. But your gospel is, "Sin shall not have dominion over you." This is the good news for sinful humanity. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus gives freedom from the law of sin and death." And your temptation, the test of your faith, is practically this:—Do you believe Satan's lie, and continue in sin? Or do you act upon Christ's word, and be free from sin?

Your safety, your very life, hangs upon your decision.

When temptation assails you, when evil passions rise within you, and allurements of vice tempt you from without, in the hard struggle think not that you are left alone. When you think yourself alone, you are in danger. In danger from yourself, for you are tempted to say, "No one shall know it;" in danger from Satan, who whispers in your ear, "There is no help for you."

But remember and believe Christ's word—"Lo, I

am with you alway !” His presence, and the sense of His presence, are both a restraint from sin, and a strength to resist it.

“The Lord is on my side : I will not fear.”

Your Redeemer takes your part against sinful self and Satan. He endured temptation in our nature ; and “forthat He Himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”

Look to the Son of man, and be of good courage ; He encountered Satan and his temptation, even as He calls His followers to do.

Jesus brought not against His enemy the artillery of heaven, nor the destroying brightness of the divine glory. In these we could have learned no hope nor help from His example. The Captain of our salvation stood as among the ranks of His followers, and wielded in His encounter the same weapon which He puts into our hands—“The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

“It is written,” “it is written,” “it is written.” Thus did Christ resist the Devil and overcome him ; and so He will have us to take to us the whole armour of God, to be mighty in the Scriptures, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.

CHAPTER VII.

MANLINESS.



IN all undertakings, courage and perseverance are mighty aids to success; if we be faint-hearted, we certainly fail.

There are great differences between youth in the spirit of enterprise. Some are ever hopeful, never weary; others are soon discouraged, and always desponding. In the business of this life, such differences mark the career, and decide the fortunes of men. Indeed, the patient perseverance, or the faint-hearted fickleness of youth, has greater influence on their future, than any difference of talent or of outward advantages.

It is the same also in spiritual life. These energies of perseverance and good hope have the promise of success in the kingdom of heaven.

Whatsoever God calls us to do, whether for the life that now is, or for that which is to come, He requires us to do with all our might; and He admonishes, by the labours and hopes bestowed on

worldly affairs, what hopeful activity we ought to exert in the heavenly.

It is a noble work that is set before us in our Gospel calling; a work for good to ourselves and good to our fellowmen; a work for God and His glory. In one word it is WELL-DOING. Well-doing, in its purity of purpose and benevolence of act, is restored to the hopes and the attainment of mankind.

We are encouraged to aim at the divine perfection of character and work, *to be like God*, who is good, and *to do like God*, whose goodness is over all His works. This privilege, and it is a glorious privilege, we have through the Son of God, who, finding no goodness in us, came from heaven to endow us with His own. This is His purpose and power towards us, to redeem us from evil works, and to create us anew unto good works. So that goodness and humanity may be again conjoined; and as it is human by nature to sin, much more it is now human by grace to do good.

Well-doing, then, is *the Gospel in you* and *the Gospel by you*. It is your experience of Gospel grace, and your exercise of Gospel grace; your conversion to goodness, and your practice of it. In you and by you are manifested "the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and

praise of God." You become in heart and in life witnesses for Christ, proving your call to glory and virtue, in "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report."

Well-doing is the every-day practice of the Gospel. It is not any single act of goodness, or work of righteousness; it is not religious duty as distinct from secular work; not a Sunday's concern, but the business of all the week and all our life, in all that regards God supremely, and our fellow-men as He gives us opportunity.

Well-doing in your studies is diligence; in your service, it is faithfulness; in your dealings, it is honesty; in your mercies, it is thankfulness; in your necessities, patience; in your abundance, generosity; in your poverty, contentment.

Well-doing in your heart is sincerity; in your speech, truthfulness; in your words, kindness; in your conduct, uprightness. Toward parents, it is honour and obedience; to superiors, due respect; to inferiors, kindness and civility; to your equals, generous esteem.

It is the word, and mind, and example of Christ, thought out, and wrought out, and lived out by every

one in his several place and his social relations in the world.

Your life, as a Christian youth, is thus a "continuance in well-doing," and it must needs be "a patient continuance." You seek thereby for "glory and honour and immortality."

Do not forget, in looking for the faithful servant's reward, that the *well-doing* must come before the "Well done!" It is not without an effort that we can either be good or do good; much opposition, many difficulties, lie in our path.

The path to "glory and virtue" has ever been a difficult one; the high aim of man's life has in every age and by every means proved itself arduous of attainment. Man felt the necessity for a *hard fight* to reach it, and hence the *warlike* meaning attached to these things, glory and virtue.

Virtue, MANLINESS, was among the ancients a martial quality; it signified courage, fortitude, how to *quit oneself as a man* in the battle-field. And "glory" was the fame, the reward of such virtue—the honour and recompense and crown of those, who could quit them like men in scenes of danger and death.

The Gospel has not altogether changed this character of glory and virtue. It calls man with intenser

earnestness indeed to the battle ; it teaches a virtue that must be attained and manifested in warfare, a glory reserved for those who gain the victory.

But the battle-field is changed, the weapons of war are changed, the enemies are different in nature. It is a spiritual warfare with spiritual weapons against spiritual foes.

Virtue, as Gospel well-doing, is to be attained and maintained only by a hard fight against self and sin and oppositions of evil and of evil-doers.

There are hindrances and discouragements under which many faint and grow weary in well-doing. Let these rather rouse your courage and nerve your arm for the good fight of faith. These difficulties and oppositions to well-doing are partly in yourselves, and partly in the world amidst which you live.

In yourselves, your good resolutions and endeavours find the opposition of a depraved will, an enemy in your indolence and love of sinful pleasure.

Hence the call for self-denial, temperance, self-restraint. For "every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." This is a manly discipline. Selfish ease is not manly, it is mean ; self-indulgence and sensuality is not manly, it is beastly. He that yields to excess, whether it be gluttony or drunkenness, or depraved taste or carnal

lust, is not like a man, "he is like the beasts that perish."

"Quit you like men," ye youth, in placing a girdle about your loins and a curb upon your passions. Be manly in giving up every habit, which you know by experience or by due warning is bad, vicious, hurtful; and exercise yourselves unto temperance, sobriety, virtue, godliness.

In the world and its ways and fashions, are found hindrances and discouragements to well-doing.

There is evil example too readily followed, evil counsel so flattering to the ear, the enticements of vice so alluring to the eye. Many a youth, going forth from a home of piety and virtue, begins well and with the best intentions of well-doing. Yet ere he has faced the battle of life, he becomes a coward, not from fear, but false shame; not from love of evil, but for the praise of them that take pleasure in wickedness.

My young friends, even in the view of men, you have more credit in persevering in virtue. It is more manly to resist evil than to yield to it; it is more noble to keep a good resolution than to fail in it. Any one may do the latter; it is not every one who can do the former.

Never let yourself be persuaded that goodness is

silly, and wickedness manly. It is hard indeed to bear ridicule ; and a youth, who would face any open danger, and defend his post of honour against any opponents, hangs his head and loses heart, when the assault is a word or a look, or a sneer of derision from his companions. And so to show himself a man, he joins others, who are wearing out of them all that is manly in vigour of body and strength of mind and health of soul.

It is a pitiful mistake, O youth, even as regards the opinion of your tempters. They don't think you a man, when they have made you one like themselves ; they do not reserve for that effect the respect due to your manly courage.

But they can, even the most reckless and depraved of evil-doers, they can appreciate as manly the virtue that resists them, the self-respect which they cannot degrade, the courage that withstands equally their threats and their ridicule, the good resolution that shows no weakness of yielding.

“ Watch, then ; stand fast in the faith ; quit ye like men ; be strong.” Your Saviour and your God, the mighty one, the Captain of your salvation, is looking down upon you, to encourage and aid you in every good work.

“ Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace

that is in Christ Jesus." "If sinners entice thee, consent thou not."

Rather draw them by your example to the faith and fellowship of Christ. This shall be a good work, not to be forgotten by Him who saith, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven."

Finally, be not weary in well-doing through the indolence of self-sufficiency, or the impatience of reward.

Think not that you are well enough, and have done enough. You have taken your post, and you must keep it; you have undertaken a great work, and you must persevere in it to the end; you have started on a noble pursuit, and you must not halt, nor turn back.

Onward and upward is the aim and spirit of your Gospel calling, even this "one thing;" "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before, press ye toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!"

"In due season you shall reap if you faint not." *The due season* is God's, and you may well wait for it. It is honour sufficient, that God now gives you grace to do well. Let *your work* be your present glory, whether rewarded or not. The recompense of glory is, when the work is done.

Remember, too, that saying, "one soweth, and another reapeth;" and is it not the sower's glory, that he has left something to be reaped?

How serious the thought, that this also may be the *sower's shame*. For the saying is true equally of the good and of the evil, which men do.

What then shall others reap from your sowing? into what labours and fruits of your labour shall those enter, who are coming up after you in the career of life?

These privileges you enjoy must be either better or worse in passing through your hands. As you receive them, so give them. Let the good word, and good work, and good example you inherit, be yours to enjoy and to improve for yourselves; and let the younger who follow, find in your footsteps "a pattern of good works," and an encouragement to well-doing.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WAY AND THE GUIDE.

TRIDENT youth! what shall curb thy energies, what daunt thy resolution, what exhaust thy strength? The sanguine hopes of youth know neither danger nor fatigue; they scorn the forebodings of a weary foot and a flagging spirit. In the spring-time of life there is a buoyancy of mental and bodily powers, which allows neither sober effort nor repose. To the young all things seem possible, all objects attainable; nought too high for youthful ambition, nought too arduous for youthful courage and enterprise. So commences youth's early day, fresh as the morning, exultant "as a strong man to run a race," eager and ready for a trial of power, that joy to all young animal life.

Fair and promising to youth's ardour open the many paths of life in the world. For life is likened to a journey, wherein man has his way and his walk. There is a good way and an evil way; there is a way

to wealth and a path of poverty, a road to honour and a path of shame ; but “ the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

The way of man is alike for all at two points, its beginning and its end. From the cradle to the grave may be a long journey, or a very short one ; and between these two points winds the path of human life. How diverse the steps of our childhood, our youth, our manhood, our old age ! How devious the course of life, as men severally follow it ! As varied the way of man, as the dispositions and purpose and will of every individual of mankind.

Every man has his peculiar way ; he has his own character, or the way of his morals ; his own enjoyments, or the way of his inclinations ; his particular calling, or the way of his interests and duties.

These ways are manifold, and are pursued at every period of life ; who shall say at what time youth makes the choice and enters the path ? But this from earliest days be youth’s lesson and earnest thought, that many as are *the ways of living*, there is *ONE ONLY WAY OF LIFE*.

The wisdom of the ancients set forth life’s entrance by an allegory of a choice between the path of virtue and the path of pleasure. The wisdom of “ the

Ancient of days," presents to you a far better example. The young prince, the beloved of the Lord, entering upon the glory of a kingdom, hears in a dream by night the voice of God, saying, "Ask what I shall give thee!" You know Solomon's choice. He asked not riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of his enemies, nor long life for himself; but he answered, "Give me now wisdom and knowledge;" with that sweet, hopeful confession, "I am but a little child, I know not how to go out or come in!" And such be your choice. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God;" and who lacks it not? Does it require a long experience of life to teach us the acknowledgment, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps?"

Soon shall you learn how little your youthful ardour can achieve under your own direction; how often your abilities fail when your self-confidence promised you success; how your good purposes faltered while you trusted your own strength, and you turned aside to folly, because you were too wise to take warning.

And when you did succeed, and reach your aim, was it in the very way you had planned, by the very path you had sketched out? O! no. At every retro-

spect—at every step of life's journey, we are a wonder to ourselves. Events of which we have no thought change our whole course. Views open up contrary to all expectation. What we have planned for our own good issues in disappointment ; and the evil we were carefully avoiding has turned to our advantage.

With all our foresight and our shrewdest calculations, and best employed talents, we are not, any one of us, the guide of our way or the maker of our own future. Near and round about our path are influences, external shall I say ? for they are intimately interwoven with every affection, every hope, every action of our life—influences with which the great Ruler of all compasseth our path in the busy day, and our thoughts in the stillness of night. For “none of us liveth to himself,” even in our temporal, worldly, and selfish purposes of living. No one of us stands alone, or walks alone, even in our own peculiar path of living. Our every step and turning is influenced by our relation to our fellowmen. Family ties, society's requirements, the voice of authority, the power of stronger wills, the competition of others in the same path, the claims of affection, the changes and modifications to which at every point our purposes are liable, these are the experiences which sooner or later draw forth the confession, “O Lord, I know that the

way of man is not in himself!" It is well that we learn to make our appeal to God. All those influences that surround and modify our way are His providence; and in this acknowledgment, whether prompted by our own experience or taught us by the Word, we utter at once our distrust in ourselves, and our trust in the Lord.

The appeal itself leads us to Him, who is "the Way and the Truth and the Life"—the Life and the Light of men.

To you, as to His dear son, He speaks: "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the Guide of my youth!"

"Remember now therefore thy Creator in the days of thy youth." "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

The word of God is a lamp unto your feet, and a light unto your path. By taking heed to this light, and to Him whom it reveals in wisdom and love, you shall walk safely and wisely and prosperously. By this light you shall cleanse your way from the sins and follies of youth, and walk worthily of Him who has called you to His kingdom and glory.

To you, as Paul to Timothy, I may say, that "from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which

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are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Have these Scriptures, early learnt, made you wise? Wise to choose the good and refuse the evil? Wise to know and act upon the belief that you cannot walk aright, "except some man should guide you." And who shall be your guide? Who, but the man Christ Jesus.

"I am the Light of the world," He saith; "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life!"

"Be ye followers of God, as dear children." Trust yourselves and your hopes and purposes of life to Him, as to a wise and loving father. He regards you with loving concern; He has the kindest goodwill towards you. He gave you those energies of mind and body, and seeks not to repress, but to direct them. He makes your days happy, that you may rejoice with thankful heart. He makes your life strong for healthful exercise and ennobling study and honest labour. He is acquainted with all your ways, and will have you in all your ways to acknowledge Him.

Whatsoever you purpose, submit to Him in prayer; whatsoever you desire, first ask it of God, then diligently seek it. And what you dare not pray for, neither

desire nor try to obtain. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass."

And be this your Gospel of life,—“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHRISTIAN NAME.



THE disciples of Christ were called CHRISTIANS first in Antioch. Whether the name was assumed by themselves, or was given to them by others, does not appear from the sacred narrative.

That it should have been made known first in Antioch corresponds with what is related by other histories, that the people of that city were famous for inventing what we call nicknames.

The name "Christian," indeed, has nothing in itself of the reproach expressed in the names elsewhere bestowed on the followers of Jesus. It is derived from that form of their Master's name which was best known among the Greeks and Romans, and was very naturally made to mark the followers of Christ, as the name "Herodians" was given to the party of Herod.*

* See "Life and Epistles of St Paul," by Conybeare and Howson, vol. i., chap. iv.

The believers in the Gospel had no need to take to themselves any such personal or party name. They were not one of many sects, professing one of many different religions ; but were, and were privileged to call themselves, "the people of God," having the one truth, and professing the only faith and true worship of the Most High, the only living and true God, the Maker of heaven and earth.

Of the three occasions on which the name "Christian" occurs in the Scriptures, it is only once used as from within the Church, where writes St Peter,—
"If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed." And here it is in contrast with names of evil-doers and those who are "without God in the world."

The later is the better use of the name, as now it denotes the highest degree of moral character,—all that is good and virtuous, and true, and lovely, and *humane*,—that is what MAN, the child of God, ought to be.

Let the Christian youth regard and bear the name in this light of *character* ; and let him prove it, as he can, in his individual conduct.

You are individualized in the family and the nation by your name. Your name is your personal mark, the representative of yourself to others. It is

of necessity that each one of us have a name. The first care of your parents on your birth was to choose a name for you ; and by this name you have been registered in the public records of your country.

This, however, is not your name in the kingdom of heaven ; it was repeated at your baptism, but *it is not your baptismal name*. The name into which you are baptized is “the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” THE NAME OF GOD in His covenant of adoption.

Hence ye are known as “a godly seed;” and it becomes you to consider how solemn a thing it is, that, even by profession, you bear THE NAME OF GOD upon you.

It is your privilege thus to be regarded as belonging to the Church and household of God.

But there is here a token and an admonition of a better privilege, the baptism of THE SPIRIT, and the “new name” of your regeneration and adoption of God. Thus-are ye “the children of God ;” and the Spirit of adoption prompts your prayer, “Our Father who art in Heaven !” You are in God’s family which in heaven and earth is named of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. You have a name and a place in the house of God, not as servants, but as sons, sharing the Father’s love, and the Father’s in-

heritance with the elder Brother, the only begotten Son of God.

Now "as many of you as have been baptized unto Christ, have put on Christ."

You have put on His name, and you call yourselves *Christians*; you have put on the garb of His disciples, and you sit at His feet, hearing His voice and learning His doctrine.

Have you put on His character? Is "this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus," the mind of meekness and humility, of cheerful obedience and patient endurance, of piety and purity, of mercy and forgiveness, of kindness and tender sympathy, of devoted zeal and earnest working?

"Be ye clothed with humility; be courteous, be kindly affectionate one to another, with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another." "Render not evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing; even as Christ pleased not Himself," but "suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps."

A name, in order to be personal and distinctive, must denote *character*, or *deed*, or *office*: as in those Scripture names which God bestowed on His chosen children and eminent servants of old. So there are among Christians diversities of names and characters,

corresponding to diversities of grace and spiritual gifts, as *Israel, Jedidiah, Barnabas, Peter.*

The work of grace manifests itself in divers manners ; the new birth in Christ developes differences of character among the children of God.

Even as in the family there are various forms, dispositions, traits of character and talent, under the one family likeness ; so it is in the family and household of God. “ There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.” Among the disciples of the same Master, there is a different learning and different application of the same truth.

In one, *faith* is strong ; in another, *love* is warm ; in another, *joy* abounds ; in another, *peace*. In some, patience is most developed ; in some, gentleness ; in some, fortitude ; in some, temperance and self-denial. All, in some degree, have each of the Christian graces, but not equally all of them.

YOUR CHRISTIAN NAME, accordingly, is that grace and fruit of the Spirit most plainly manifested in you ; your special exercise of faith ; or work of love, or patience of waiting ; as God has appointed for you your service of doing or of suffering, according to His will.

Observe, then, and cultivate your special calling as a child of God ; and consider that, by whatsoever grace, or work, or endurance, you are called to serve

and to confess Christ before men, *this is the name* by which you are written in heaven, in the book of life. See, then, that you have such a name and character as Christ will know and acknowledge in the great and glorious day ; a name of faithfulness ; a name of fortitude ; a name of wisdom ; a name of truthfulness ; a name of brotherly love ; a name of meekness ; a name of patience ; a name of goodness ; a name of temperance ; a name of godliness and charity. Take heed, ye children of disobedience. There are names which some of you are earning for yourselves—names which ought not to be once named among saints—names against which God has recorded, that they “ *are not written* in the Book of Life !”

CHAPTER X.

ETERNAL LIFE BEGUN.



HERE is a too common error of associating religion chiefly with thoughts of death and judgment, making its most important concern a preparation for these events.

Thus the Gospel is regarded mainly in relation to a future doom ; and the great salvation becomes only an escape from hell to heaven.

With such partial views, it were not so unreasonable that mankind, whether in youth or in manhood, should put off from time to time the serious concern of their souls. For heaven and hell, death and judgment, seem very far off while life and health continue ; and why spend all our days in a concern which can only profit us in the end ?

But present the Gospel in its full and true light as the RELIGION of LIFE, and you give force to the argument that the earlier it is attended to the better, *for we lose by every day's delay.*

Know, then, O youth, that this Gospel call is

specially addressed to you, "Lay hold on eternal life!"

From your new birth in Christ; through every stage of your growth in grace and knowledge; through every step of your progress in holiness and virtue on to your perfection and glory, all is *one life*, and this new and progressive life is LIFE ETERNAL.

What is *eternal* is not altogether *future*, although our views of it tend naturally in that direction.

God, who is "The Eternal," fills in our reverential regard the past and the present and the future. He is "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, who is, and who was, and who is to come!" He is, and lives without the limits of time.

Try, then, to abstract the idea of Life from that of Time, and you may better understand what is life eternal. Nor should this be difficult to do. How often by the winter's fire, with your book unread upon your knee, or in the summer's shade, lying on the bank with your fishing-rod by your side, you live through hours of waking thought, unconscious of time. You know you have lived, not by the beats of the pendulum, or the lengthening of the shadows only, but by the passing thoughts which have flitted through your mind.

The busiest life, and the happiest life, is that in

which we are unconscious of time and its progress, in which we reckon not hours, but progress of work and variations of delight.

So it is when enwrap in the exercise of prayer, or in hearing an interesting discourse, you live without note of time. Would that the ministrations of the house of God were always—both by him who conducts, and by those who attend them, made to afford such experiences of *life apart from time!* These truly might be seasons of our eternal life.

From the Lord of life, the living God, is our life.

Our bodily life begins and advances according to that system in which we are so “fearfully and wonderfully made.”

He who formed our frame and breathed into our nostrils the breath of life, orders the varying periods of our renewal and decay, continued through their course or suddenly interrupted, until “the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God who gave it.” So this our life proceeds, not so truly by changing periods of time, as by changes of living functions in ourselves.*

Much more, we may say, does spiritual life—the life of the soul—proceed by other than temporal changes; and eternal life, that is our life in God, is

* See Lewis's “Physiology of Common Life.”

revealed to us, not in regard to duration of time, but to *condition of soul*. It is the growth of a divine nature in us, and "though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

Do you ever inquire, How does my spirit live? Do you take account of its wants, its cravings, its hunger and thirst? You do not suppose that your soul, like the divine Spirit, is self-existing, self-supporting. Your body perishes for want of food, and you hear of *perishing souls*. You think of death as a power approaching from without, and you behold, and fear to meet his ravages on the body. But does not death also come from the depths within you? *Yea, he issues out of our very life*. The waste of the body is not always balanced by the repair; and the very processes of life induce changes in our frame which bring with them a gradual deposition of death.

Well then, my young fellow-mortals, consider that *sin is the waste of the soul*, and the living in sin is the death-process of your spirit.

Eternal life, as revealed in the Gospel, is a *power of life* that meets and repairs our spiritual decay. It is a *passing from death unto life*; "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death."

But not only is there this death-process through the power of sin on the soul, there is also a "law of death," a "condemnation." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die!" It is the sentence written against us by the Holy God.

From this law and sentence of condemnation, eternal life is the escape, our only escape.

And this is the Gospel to you, in the words of Christ, — "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life!"

Eternal life, then, as offered to us, is *the soul's salvation*; it is contrasted, in other words of the Gospel, with "perishing," even as "seeing life" is contrasted with "abiding under the wrath of God."

The urgent inquiry, therefore, is not, when, or how long is eternal life? but, what is eternal life to me, and how may I have eternal life?

It concerns you *in the present time*, and *in your present state*. You must have it now, else it may never be yours; it must be in you a present change; it cannot be otherwise a future possession. Look again at the Saviour's words quoted above. Mark the *presents* on which *the future* is promised; "*hath*

everlasting life,"—" *is passed* from death unto life,"—" *shall not* come into condemnation."

You remember, again, the young ruler who inquired of Christ, "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

He sought a good and precious gift; he desired to lay hold on eternal life. But he sought it not in the only way in which it can be found. He overlooked a plain truth, that *life cannot be had by doing*. For a man must first have life, before he can do any good thing. Ere any one can do the works of God, he must be quickened by the good Spirit of God. Hence in his self-sufficiency, this young man failed in his good object. He had done everything, as he thought, that man could do, to earn such a precious reward. "All these commandments have I kept from my youth up; what lack I yet?" He was "not far" from the kingdom of heaven; but small as the distance seemed, it was a deep gulf. He could not pass it. The rich man cannot enter with his riches, and he would not go in without them.

When the test of heavenly life was applied to him, he was found woefully wanting; and it appeared that, with all his seeming eagerness after life eternal, the only life really valuable in his eyes, was the life he lived amid his "great possessions."

If you, then, sincerely desire to lay hold on eternal life, do not deceive yourselves in the pursuit of it. Neither wait for it until another time, nor expect it by any other way, than this Gospel—"to-day," and this Gospel—"gift of God."

"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

And mark the alternative in the Lord's words elsewhere. "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth (loveth less) his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal!"

By this you are warned by the loving Saviour, that there is a selfish worldly love of life, which is a foolish misspending and ruin of it; and that the true love of life and use of life is to spend it, and, if need be, sacrifice it, in seeking a better life, that is, life eternal.

"One thing is needful;" choose ye "that good part" which shall not be taken away from you.

Your spiritual life, its care, its interests, its improvement, its everlasting glory and perfection, be this your earnest, your persevering, your first and last concern. "Behold, I set before you this day life and death; therefore choose life." There is to every son of man this alternative, *either the death of sin in him, or the death of the soul.* Yes, dear youth, you must

be, by God's help, the death of sin, else sin will be the death of you! Life out of death, or death unto death, which is it for you? Be this your death process, to be *dying daily unto sin*, and yours shall be the life-progress, "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Let this be a conscious and marked progress in you, from death unto life. Be working out your own salvation in the faith and experience that God, the Spirit of life and holiness, is working in you.

Every motion of sin you resist, receives thereby a death-blow; every evil desire denied, every angry and lustful passion quelled, every bad habit abandoned, each is a step in this death-process against "the body of sin."

Be not discouraged by the experiences of besetting sin and the remaining power of sin. "It shall not have dominion over you." But it shall not die by a sudden death. Death is rarely an instant end; but the destruction of sin is going on.* You shall starve out the enemy, if you cannot drive him out by assault.

Meanwhile, see *you are not starving your soul*. How fares it with your spiritual life?

It must be fed and nourished, or it will languish and die. What the Spirit of grace has begun in you,

* See Arnold's "Christian Life," &c., sermon viii., p. 182.

the means of grace, by His blessing, foster and strengthen and fructify in you. The new life in Christ is sustained and advanced by His ordinances, the word, the sacraments, and prayer.

KNOWLEDGE is the food of the soul. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

Search the Scriptures, therefore, for in them ye have this eternal life. They impart to you the highest and best of all knowledge, even the treasures of heavenly wisdom. The words of Christ "are spirit and are life."

In Christ Himself ye have this blessed gift of God. "In Him is life; and He is our life." "He that hath the Son of God hath life; he that hath not the Son hath not life."

Receive Him by faith into your souls. He offers Himself as your spiritual food, "the Bread of Life," the source, the means, the strength of spiritual life in you.

Go to Him in PRAYER. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life!" "Lord, evermore give us this bread!"

As in childhood you asked from your parents bread for the body, and had it for the asking; go in the same faith and sense of need to your heavenly

Father, and ask of Him the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of life. This free gift the Son of God died to purchase for you; this He ever lives to bestow. And "continue instant in prayer." The object is worthy of all your importunity; you must have it, or you die. Nor in receiving the gift, think to cease from praying. Prayer is the breathing of your new life, both a means of obtaining, and a mode of manifesting, the power of spiritual life.

Nearer still than in the hearing of the word; nearer than in the approaches of prayer, and the offerings of praise, you must come to Christ, who is your life. In the COMMUNION of His holy Table, seek His fellowship, join your spirit to His, feel through the emblems of His death, how He loved you, in dying that you might live, in still living for you and with you, that you may live for ever.

O young disciples, early dedicated to the Lord, from childhood taught to know Jesus and His love, why are ye strangers in the household of God? Have you considered your baptism, your engrafting with Christ, and your engagement to be the Lord's? Have you renounced the name solemnly put on you, "the name of my God?" Has your instruction in Gospel doctrine alienated you from Gospel privilege?

If you know and believe what baptism into the

name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost signifies and seals, have you no care that it be maintained, promoted, and exhibited in you? Had you died in childhood, God would have finished His own work begun, without your profession of faith and fellowship in Christ. But by His very prolonging of your days to the period of active and conscious intelligence, God puts you on your responsibilities; He reasonably requires now, what He has given knowledge and ability to offer, your self-dedication in a holy covenant with your God.

Ye sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, how can ye live without the children's bread? It is for your spiritual nourishment and growth in grace; and this communion with Christ, who died and rose again, carries your spirit by faithful fellowship through the death unto sin and the rising to newness of life.

It is for the strengthening of your faith, and the increase of your love to Christ, and your zeal in His cause, that He makes Himself known to you "in the breaking of bread."

Nor less needful is this communion with Christ for renewing the vigour of your active service, your labour of love, and your works of righteousness, to the praise of His glorious grace. You return to the world from communion with Him who loved you, to

carry out, as you have, and can find opportunity, the law and the work of Christ's love among your fellow-men.

The exercise of the divine life is in the work of divine love, and its growth to perfection is by every step you take in following the example of Christ. So are ye fulfilling in you the purpose of God's love, even as love and likeness grow together ; ye are becoming "conformed to the image of His Son." And "WHEN HE WHO IS YOUR LIFE SHALL APPEAR, YE SHALL BE LIKE HIM : YOU SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS, AND SHALL ALSO APPEAR WITH HIM IN GLORY !"







